Speech from the Throne

by

The Honourable Marion L. Reid
Lieutenant Governor

at the Opening of the

Fourth Session

of the

Fifty-Eighth General Assembly

of the Province of

Prince Edward Island

on

March 23, 1992

at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

It is my privilege and honor, in the name of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11, to welcome you to this Fourth Session of the Fifty-Eighth General Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

I know that you will share my wish that this Assembly, at the commencement of its 1992 Session, proudly acknowledge the 40th anniversary of Her Majesty's ascension to the throne as Queen of Canada and of other Commonwealth countries. Those who viewed the recent CBC documentary on Her Majesty will agree with me that she has nurtured the role of constitutional monarch and remains totally dedicated to strengthening the concepts and realities of our Commonwealth of Nations.

I would like also to offer my congratulations to Island Olympian David MacEachern for his athletic achievement at Albertville, France. At the same time, I want to offer my sympathy on the passing of an outstanding Islander, R. Fulton Sanderson of York Point, who for years bred and showed some of the best hereford cattle in North America. This Island farmer had few equals as a national breeder, exhibitor and judge of livestock.

ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY AND CHALLENGE

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In an increasingly interdependent world Prince Edward Islanders are not isolated from the effects of decisions, events and circumstances which occur elsewhere. The challenge is to promote our goals, objectives and shared interests in regional, national and international affairs while protecting our way of life and the special nature of our economy. This is the challenge which has guided My Government.

There are a number of **external forces** which will affect, in a very real and direct fashion, the future of Prince Edward Island. The move towards liberalized trade poses both problems and opportunities. While Prince Edward Island is a major exporter of agricultural, fisheries, processed, and manufactured products, a number of irritants are being experienced under the Canada-US Trade Agreement, including a countervail on hogs and restrictions on the movement of seed and tablestock potatoes. There are as well concerns that the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement would leave Prince Edward Island vulnerable to intense and unfair competition.

Similarly, negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade threaten Canada's system of supply management. My Government has repeatedly reaffirmed its support on behalf of dairy, egg and poultry producers and has urged the Government of Canada to continue to seek the strengthening and clarification of Article XI. The present supply management system provides much-needed stability to these important sectors of the Prince Edward Island agricultural industry. As most Islanders know, our dairy, egg and poultry farms represent more than economic productivity. They are at the very heart of our rural character.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Prince Edward Islanders have been spared some of the harsher realities of the current recession. For just as our province at another time did not fully share in the prosperity of higher-growth regions, neither is it experiencing the painful adjustments of those same regions during this period of economic decline. The people of the province have managed their resources well. We are also fortunate to be living in a province where hard work and cooperation are time-honored values.

Nevertheless, the current recession is slowly taking its toll on the provincial economy, affecting our tourist industry and the demand for other goods and services. A decline in consumer confidence continues to be of concern to our retail and service sectors.

Accompanying the recession has been a significant drop in federal transfer payments to the province. Over the past five years **equalization and other federal transfer payments have fallen dramatically** from projected levels. This major loss of revenue has seriously limited My Government's ability to improve programs and services for the people of the province.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Because of the cumulative impact of the external pressures just mentioned, My Government over the past year has had to exercise extreme prudence, restraint and responsibility in managing its affairs. It acknowledges with appreciation the efforts of others, such as the Board of Governors of the Union of Public Sector Employees, in helping to control the deficit.

During these difficult times, My Government is committed to providing protection and support for those citizens most vulnerable - the elderly, the disabled and the disadvantaged. At the same time, it is committed to maintaining those economic development initiatives which will enhance the prospects for future growth.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

During the past year, our primary producers have been called upon to demonstrate their resilience and determination in the face of major difficulties. Despite the problems being experienced as a result of the PVY^{n} virus, the agricultural industry continues to provide a large measure of stability to the economy. Working together with the industry, My Government has been successful in establishing **new markets for potatoes**, resulting last fall in a major export sale to Algeria, the largest ever made by this province to a single country.

As a result of these marketing efforts PEI achieved the highest prices paid for table potatoes in North America in a year of depressed prices and at the same time gained much needed employment.

ADJUSTING TO THE NEW ECONOMIC REALITIES

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

When this Assembly last met, My Government put forward enabling legislation to assist Islanders in dealing with an increasingly competitive and global economic environment.

The **new economic development agencies** announced last year will be in operation by the end of this fiscal year. They will offer aggressive business development, marketing, and lending programs aimed at enhancing the economy of our province.

These new agencies will achieve an economic development focus by integrating functions from five line departments and three existing agencies. Partnerships with the farming, fishing, and small business communities, with the tourism industry, and with the broader private sector will be key factors in achieving a new and dynamic thrust in economic development.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

The traditional areas of the Island economy - food production from agriculture and the fishery, and tourism - will be further enhanced and strengthened. The integral role of small business in all parts of the province will be recognized with renewed programs. **New areas for Island enterprise, such as aerospace and communications, will be aggressively pursued.** Better linkages will be promoted among the private sector, our University, the Food Technology Centre, Holland College, and the Agencies. The goal will be economic development in all sectors of the economy, throughout Prince Edward Island.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

During the past year, much effort was given to examining the economic systems of other jurisdictions, particularly small island societies such as our own. Assisted by the excellent research of the Institute of Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island, **My Government is looking outward to better understand our problems, challenges and opportunities as a small Island province.**

Steps will be taken to ensure that we exercise fully our jurisdictional authority in the development of new economic strength. **Procurement and tax policies will be reviewed and adjusted to stimulate economic growth.** New legislation will be introduced to provide tax credits for investment in the **labour-sponsored working ventures capital fund.**

As well, **legislation will be introduced that will make Slemon Park one of the most attractive business environments in North America.**

My Government also recognizes the advantage of consolidating purchasing of goods and services. During the coming year a new **Supply and Services Agency** will be created. The central role of this agency will be to coordinate purchasing within the public sector in order to achieve greater efficiency and, once again, to encourage economic development.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Our province will continue to have a large and necessary seasonal workforce. However, many Islanders find themselves in an unwanted cycle of short-term employment and government-provided assistance of various forms. To help address this problem **a new specialized job agency** will be created within government to provide on-the-job training, to identify and develop meaningful work projects within the public sector and the community, and to address the problems of individuals who are hindered from gaining permanent employment. This new unit will work closely with the various federal government departments, our educational institutions, and the private sector in exercising its mandate.

THE FIXED LINK/BRIDGE

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government is aware of the profound significance of the fixed link project, and of the undeniable and fundamental differences in public opinion as to its desirability and long term social and economic impact. It is important, therefore, that My Government again state its position on the fixed crossing to this Assembly.

In 1987, in response to initiatives by private sector developers and the Federal Government, My Government first articulated the terms and conditions by which it would support this project. These conditions are as follows:

- Compensation for adverse effects on the Province's highway system;
- Continuation of the Wood Islands - Caribou ferry service;
- Conclusion of an agreement on submerged lands;
- Fair and reasonable tolls;
- Assistance programs for affected workers of Marine Atlantic;
- Compensation to overcome adverse economic impact on the Borden area;
- Acceptable industrial benefits;

- Compensation for fishermen whose livelihood is adversely affected by the project;
- A utility corridor for the benefit of the Province; and, most importantly,
- Environmental acceptability.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

The Fixed Link remains an exceedingly difficult, and at times emotional, issue for all Islanders, including the members of this Assembly. From the very outset, **My Government has endeavoured to follow a careful and impartial process of review**, weighing the project's implications, and listening to the views of the people.

The Fixed Link proposals currently under consideration were examined and approved by two independent environmental experts retained by the Province. A determination of public will by way of a plebiscite occurred in 1988, and a federal Environmental Assessment Review Panel (EARP) subsequently reviewed the project. In response to concerns identified by the EARP, an ice panel further examined the environmental impacts. Professionals in the Federal Departments of Environment, and Fisheries and Oceans, also gave the project extensive scientific study prior to their approval. The financial feasibility of the project is now being determined by the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, **the Province's original terms and conditions must still be met**. Should an agreement be reached with the Federal Government allowing the fixed crossing project to proceed, Islanders can be assured that such an agreement will **protect to the fullest possible extent the interests of fishermen, ferry workers, and others** who could be adversely affected by the project. This agreement would also produce **maximum benefits for local workers and businesses**.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP OF OUR LAND RESOURCES

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

The fields, woodlands and coastline of Prince Edward Island are a beautiful and invaluable resource, central to our character, and providing the very basis of our provincial economy. Indeed, history has demonstrated that Islanders and their land are one in spirit.

My Government strongly believes that land use and development policies built around good stewardship practices, consistent standards for development, and protection of sensitive environmental areas, must be adopted through a process of careful study, public consultation and education.

During the previous Session of the Legislature, and in response to the Report of the Royal Commission on the Land, My Government turned its attention in particular to land use issues in our sensitive, coastal area. A development moratorium was imposed, and Government commenced the process of researching and submitting for public comment policy options for the continued use of shorefront lands.

Our shoreline, Mr. Speaker, is comprised of interconnecting features including beaches, sand dunes, eroding bluffs, estuaries, wetlands and agricultural land. This coastal area contributes greatly to the economic livelihood of many Islanders, and to the beauty of the province as a whole. The public debate around coastal land use has been stimulating, and has reaffirmed the manifold value of the resource itself.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has completed the preparation of **a new policy framework for coastal land use and development**. This new policy and accompanying regulations and other initiatives will be announced as the Session proceeds, concurrent with the lifting of the coastal area moratorium.

In addition, My Government has in the past year established an **Environmental Areas Program** to ensure that environmentally sensitive sites are protected and managed appropriately. As part of this program, My Government has already approved forty crown land properties for designation under the *Natural Areas Protection Act*.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has introduced a **Hardwood Seedling Program** which will enable us to diversify our reforestation program through the establishment of tolerant hardwood stands on selected crown land properties.

Mr. Speaker, another priority land use issue for Government over the past years has been continued "ribbon" development along our arterial highways, and the limitations such development places on the safe and efficient transportation of people and goods. Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Royal Commission spoke strongly of the need to protect the integrity of the Island's arterial highway system, and again My Government has acted decisively following consultation, and with the future best interests of Islanders in mind.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

During this Session My Government will make public **new policies designed to control access along our arterial highways**. The present moratorium on development will be lifted. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the details of a **new Rural Residential Building Lot Program** will also be announced. The purpose of this innovative program is to discourage residential ribbon development by helping to make available affordable building lots in our smaller towns and villages.

QUALITY HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS: A BASIC RIGHT OF ALL ISLANDERS

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Islanders and their fellow Canadians have worked hard and selflessly to build a foundation of basic social programs that is unequalled in the world for its accessibility and quality. This is a **treasured legacy to our children, the integrity of which My Government is fully committed to preserving**.

Consider for example the spirit and dedication of our professional nurses, who for generations have cared for the sick, the elderly and the vulnerable. Islanders know well the value and importance of these caregivers. Recently, the public health nurses were called upon to organize and deliver the most comprehensive immunization program undertaken provincially in recent years. Working closely with our school administrators and teachers, they performed this difficult and sensitive task with both skill and commitment.

Consider as well the essential service provided by our homecare and support workers to hundreds of Island families, and the contribution of those who deliver our dental care, pharmacare and reproductive care programs.

Consider the dedicated staff of our manors and convalescent, palliative and respite care residences throughout the Province.

Consider also the formidable challenges faced by the many professional and lay workers who are asked to help those suffering from drug addictions, family violence, sexual abuse, and severe emotional disorders.

My Government takes great pride in the collective efforts of our health care community over the past few years to broaden and improve human and social services for Islanders.

These efforts are certain to continue.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

During the past year My Government has mandated a **Task Force to review the Hospital and Health Care System**, with the intention of making it more effective and efficient. For if we are to preserve the integrity of the Health Care System, then it is imperative that our administrative structures and delivery system be compatible with the resources available to operate them.

The Task Force already has consulted with health care providers and community organizations across the Island. Its report, to be tabled in this Session, will assist the Government in setting the direction of health care policy for the next decade.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government continues to realign and consolidate mandates and programs when it is appropriate to do so. This is done to make the organization of Government more responsive to the people. In the coming year, the **PEI Housing Corporation** will be fully integrated within the Department of Health & Social Services, allowing not only for the continuation of existing programs, but also for the **introduction of new specialized housing services.**

STRENGTHENING OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Like our hospitals and health care system, Prince Edward Island's schools, college and university share a proud heritage. This educational system prepares young Islanders for a world that is increasingly complex and daunting, and also affords many adults the opportunity to acquire new skills. However, our schools cannot be all things to all people, nor should they be, in a small and tightly-woven society where the family and home is the central institution.

Nevertheless, My Government remains committed to strengthening and making more relevant our public education program. **A School Achievement Indicators Program** will be implemented. This program will help assess the achievement of 13 and 16 year old students in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. As well, in the coming year the University of Prince Edward Island will accept its first class in the **Baccalaureate of Nursing Program**.

Over the coming months initiatives also will be introduced by My Government to improve learning opportunities for adults. These initiatives will include a new **Adult Basic Education Curriculum** and the continuation of training and work experience programs.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Because our public education system is vital to Islanders, Government has decided to **review its organizational structure and overall effectiveness**. Over recent months extensive consultations have taken place with parents, teachers, administrators and community groups. It is apparent that our present public education system is of high quality. However, it also has its deficiencies. For example, it allows for only marginal participation by parents and local communities. The present Task Force has examined this and other important issues such as administration, curriculum and standards. Its report will be tabled in this Session for the consideration of all members.

FAMILIES IN CRISIS

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Our preferred image of Prince Edward Island is that of a beautiful, peaceful and non-violent place, and for the most part this image is reality. However, as a caring society, we cannot be oblivious to the alarming increase of violence and abuse occurring within our families. Family violence has no social or economic boundaries, nor is it confined to any single age group. It has many causes, and is neither simply understood nor treated.

If we are to reduce family violence, there must be a community will to do so, and an even greater commitment on the part of our churches, our helping professions, our police, and by governments.

During the past year, My Government has received the *Report of the Community Consultation Committee on Family Violence*, and the *Inquiry Into Police and Department of Justice Policies and Procedures In Cases of Inter-Spousal and Intra-Family Violence* as conducted by Retired Justice Charles McQuaid. Many of the recommendations contained in these reports already have been implemented, and further actions will be taken in the year to come.

In addition, a resolution will be introduced in this Session asking members to designate Mother's Day as Family Unity Day, a special occasion for Islanders to celebrate the gift of life itself, and the sanctity of marriage and family relationships.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In the coming year implementation of a **911 Emergency Response System** for all Islanders, regardless of where they reside, will begin.

As well, My Government will continue to improve the quality of the work environment for women in the labour force. Implementation of the *Pay Equity Act* in the provincial public sector will be completed by the end of this fiscal year.

SERVICES EN FRANCAIS

MONSIEUR L'ORATEUR ET MEMBRES DE L'ASSEMBLE LEGISLATIVE:

Depuis l'adoption en 1987 de la Politique sur les services en francais, le gouvernement de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard a su améliorer ses moyens de communiquer avec sa population francophone. L'année 1988 a marqué le début d'une entente-cadre **quinquennale sur la promotion des langues officielles** entre le Secrétariat d'État du Canada et la province afin de promouvoir la prestation de services provinciaux dans les deux langues officielles. Le mécanisme de coopération actuellement en place a donné lieu à la participation de la province à d'autres ententes du genre avec les Provinces maritimes, le Québec et, plus récemment, avec l'État de la Louisiane.

Au cours des prochains mois, l'on entamera des négociations afin de renouveler l'Entente cadre sur **la promotion des langues officielles** qui arrivera à échéance en mars 1993.

Le Premier ministre proclamera la période du 4 au 12 avril, **la Semaine de la francophonie**. Il y aura des activités spéciales durant toute cette semaine pour sensibiliser le grand public à la contribution de la communauté francophone à la vie insulaire. Notre deuxième objectif, particulièrement en cette période incertaine sur le plan constitutionnel, est de rapprocher les deux communautés linguistiques de l'Île.

Une autre activité d'importance considérable pour la communauté francophone a été la construction du Carrefour de l'Isle-Saint-Jean, le centre scolaire et communautaire de Charlottetown dont l'ouverture officielle aura lieu au mois de mai 1992.

THE BACKBONE OF THE ECONOMY: OUR LABOUR FORCE

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In Prince Edward Island we are fortunate to possess a highly-skilled and diversified labour force which serves as the backbone of our provincial economy. This public and private sector workforce is responsible for the production and distribution of goods, and the provision of many services to Islanders.

Over the past few years, Government has introduced numerous legislative changes and policies that have improved benefits and working conditions for both unionized and non-unionized employees. As we face future economic challenges, our labour force is certain to become even more diversified and important.

Mr. Speaker, My Government believes strongly that **as a matter of mutual interest, labour-management relations should be conducted in a true spirit of cooperation** rather than confrontation. This requires a radical shift in the traditional way governments have related to unionized labour. It requires openness, candidness, and trust, and a willingness to solve problems together.

Such an approach, Mr. Speaker, can benefit all Islanders, and **your Government is fully committed to practicing it**.

In this Session of the Legislature, among other initiatives, a new *Employment Standards Act* will be introduced. The issue of fair competition and regional opportunity for Island-based construction companies will be examined.

VITAL ROLE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

The development of public policy and the delivery of government programs and services to the people of the province requires an efficient and responsive public service. My Government has worked closely with the Civil Service Commission and the various public sector unions to ensure that our public sector employees have opportunities to continue their professional development. As well, over the past few months the following programs were developed to improve working conditions, provide training, and assist employees in adjusting to change:

- **Employment Equity**
- **Pay Equity**
- **Employee Safety**
- **Employee Assistance**, and
- **Workforce Adjustment**

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

The people of Prince Edward Island must always be assured that the many programs and services which Government provides are of the highest possible quality, and that every public servant is motivated to pursue excellence in the workplace.

The Committee on Government Reform, with the assistance of senior public servants and representatives of private business, is presently looking at new ways of improving program delivery and service quality.

ISSUES OF SOCIAL CONSCIENCE AND INDIVIDUAL CHOICE

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

On occasion, democratically-elected governments encounter issues which involve the social conscience, and the choice or morality of individuals. These matters are not easily dealt with in the normal process of Government decision-making, and frequently they require a broader study and review. Indeed, they demand the involvement not only of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, but of the community they represent. Such is the case with the legalization of video gambling, the Sunday Shopping prohibition contained in the *Day of Rest Act*, and the provisions of the *Lands Protection Act* which address the rights of individuals, corporations, and non-residents to hold lands in Prince Edward Island.

During this Session of the Legislature, these important matters will be referred to Committees of this Legislature for public review, guidance and recommendation.

THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In 1864, this province and this Chamber played an important role in discussions leading to the building of a new nation - Canada.

Once again, Islanders and Canadians have been asked to involve themselves in discussions leading to a renewed Canada - a nation which embraces and reflects the spirit of compassion and compromise which has come to mark us as a people.

Since this Assembly last met, Mr. Speaker, this Chamber has once again played host to a delegation of parliamentarians, hearing the views of Islanders on the prospects for Canada's future.

The Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons met here in October to draw inspiration from the spirit of the members of that first delegation of 1864 - Sir John A. MacDonald, Georges Etienne Cartier and other Fathers of Confederation who began their work in this city one hundred and twenty-seven years earlier. The Special Joint Committee has now completed its work and a report of its findings and recommendations has been submitted to the Parliament of Canada.

During the third Session, Mr. Speaker, this Assembly also established a **Special Legislative Committee on the Constitution of Canada** and directed that it "meet to consult with all interested Islanders in an effort to examine and reconcile the competing visions of Canada and to make recommendations on courses of action on how to achieve a strong and united Canada from sea to sea to sea".

That Committee was impressed by the outpouring of concern expressed by Islanders for their Country.

Women, men and youth from every part of this Island spoke of their concern about the future of their lives together as Canadians. The majority of witnesses who came before the Committee said they want this period of uncertainty about the future of our Country to come to an end. Prince Edward Islanders joined other Canadians in saying repeatedly that they want this Nation, which celebrates diversity as well as unity, which values caring and acceptance, to succeed and flourish.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government, through the leadership of My First Minister, will continue to work hard with the Federal Government, the other Provinces, the Territories and the Aboriginal Leadership to ensure that we reach a consensus enabling a United Canada to continue to flourish on the northern half of this continent. Such a consensus can come about with the renewal of the founding Agreement of co-existence of the two founding cultures, two languages, and the extension of the agreement to include the multicultural communities and the Aboriginal Peoples who have been ignored and marginalized in our country's development. All Canadians will benefit if the noble principle of co-existence and respect for difference continues as the distinguishing characteristic of Canada.

MARITIME ECONOMIC COOPERATION

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

The Maritime Provinces embarked on a process of unprecedented cooperation when the Executive Councils of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island met collectively in Moncton last year. The Maritime Economic Initiative offers the prospect of a stronger regional economy, better able to participate in the economic life of Canada.

A Special Committee of the Legislative Assembly was established to learn the views of Islanders on this Maritime Cooperative Initiative. These views will be respected. My Government is very conscious of the need to ensure that the social and economic well-being of Islanders is maintained, and therefore, it will only take steps toward Maritime cooperation that are appropriate and beneficial to Prince Edward Island. Any actions must not impinge on the sovereignty of Prince Edward Island. Moreover, if the Maritime Economic Initiative is to proceed on a fair and equitable basis, Prince Edward Island must achieve parity with the Maritime Provinces in electrical energy prices.

Framework legislation on the Maritime Initiative will be introduced for consideration in this Session of the Legislative Assembly.

CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Highway infrastructure will remain a priority of My Government, including the continued development of a first-class primary highway network across the province, as well as the Charlottetown bypass and rural roads.

The School Construction Program will continue. A new elementary school will be completed at Borden. As well, major renovations, additions and extensions will be completed at Colonel Gray High School and will begin at Charlottetown Rural High School.

The construction of a new hospital will be completed in Alberton and the new hospital facility at O'Leary will proceed. Construction will be completed on a new lodge facility at Brudenell, and on the championship golf course at Lakeside.

Major renovations will take place at the Prince Edward Home in Charlottetown and the Health Centre in Summerside. Additions and extensions will be completed at Red Point Provincial Park, the Brookvale Ski Park, and The PEI Grain Elevators Corporation. As well, renovations will begin at the Mill River Golf Course.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

A new home repair program that will provide interest free loans to hundreds of Island households will be initiated. More than one hundred new Family or Senior Citizen Housing Units will be constructed across the Province. These units will be either provincially funded and managed, or they will be federally-funded and managed by the Province. Some will be federally funded with management provided by non-profit organizations.

Together, Mr. Speaker, **these public capital projects will represent a major stimulus to the construction industry** and will provide thousands of jobs for Islanders during the coming year.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In the midst of our concerns for constitutional and economic matters, we must not lose sight of the 125th anniversary of the creation of the Canadian nation in 1867. Numerous events will be held throughout the Province this year to celebrate the anniversary. As residents of the Birthplace of Confederation, it is my hope that all Islanders will participate in the anniversary activities as one means of celebrating a nation which is under stress, yet remains a stronghold for individual freedom and opportunity. I intend to participate in many Canada 125 events, and look forward with anticipation to the visit of His Excellency the Governor General to Prince Edward Island during the summer months.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the final report of the **Confederation Birthplace Commission** will be tabled in this Session, and steps will be taken towards its implementation. Moreover, My Government, together with the Charlottetown Area Development Corporation and other agencies, will participate over the coming year in the development of a **Heritage Commemorative Park** on the city's waterfront. This park will help commemorate the unique role of the capital region as Canada's Birthplace.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In addition to the measures already outlined, you will be asked to consider a number of Legislative proposals including:

- *Tourism Marketing Act*
- *Signage Act, and*
- *Foreign Resident Corporations Act*

As well amendments to:

- *Animal Health & Protection Act*
- *Plant Health Act*
- *Municipalities Act*
- *Revenue Tax Act*
- *Mental Health Act*

- *Workers Compensation Act*
- *Supreme Court Act*
- *Highway Traffic Act, and*
- *Nurses Act*

You will be asked to appropriate the funds for the services and payments required by the Assembly.

The public accounts and reports of the various departments and agencies of My Government for the year ending March 31, 1991, will be tabled for your information. The interim report forecasting estimated revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, and the estimates of revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1992, will be presented for your consideration.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

This past year has been an unsettling and formidable one for Islanders.

Prince Edward Island's traditional dependence upon Ottawa is changing. Federal transfer payments to the Province, as stated earlier, have been drastically and unilaterally reduced in recent years. This unexpected shift in our fiscal relationship with the Federal Government, especially evident over the past year, has made My Government acutely aware of the need to become more self-reliant and resourceful.

This call to greater self-reliance is the major challenge which faces Islanders as the decade unfolds.

It is a challenge already being met by many, including our farmers and fishermen who consistently bring to the marketplace some of the finest and most valued food products in the world.

It is a challenge also being met by the enterprise of our tourist and small business operators.

However, this economic base will have to be broadened and made stronger if Prince Edward Island is to achieve its goal of greater independence and self-reliance. While protecting and nurturing our established attributes, we must remain open to new ideas and alternatives, to new investment opportunities, and to new ways of attracting industrial activity appropriate to our Island and its people.

No single development strategy or plan can deliver Prince Edward Island its economic future. Instead, what is required in these times is a set of complementary strategies which recognizes opportunity wherever it exists. As rural Canadians discovered during another recessionary period in their history, putting all your eggs in one basket is never a good policy. **My Government is committed to achieving greater economic diversity**.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Islanders remain proud of their culture and unique identity, but we also know that ours is a community tied historically and necessarily to the Atlantic seaboard, to other parts of Canada, and increasingly to the rest of the world. This inter-relatedness brings with it great challenges and opportunities for a small Island province.

My Government is extremely confident that the people of Prince Edward Island, as they have done for centuries, will pursue together a future for their children that is based on knowledge, wisdom and responsibility.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.